

REMARKS/ ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-8, 11-13, 23, 24 and 27-29 are presently pending in this application. No claims have been currently amended or cancelled.

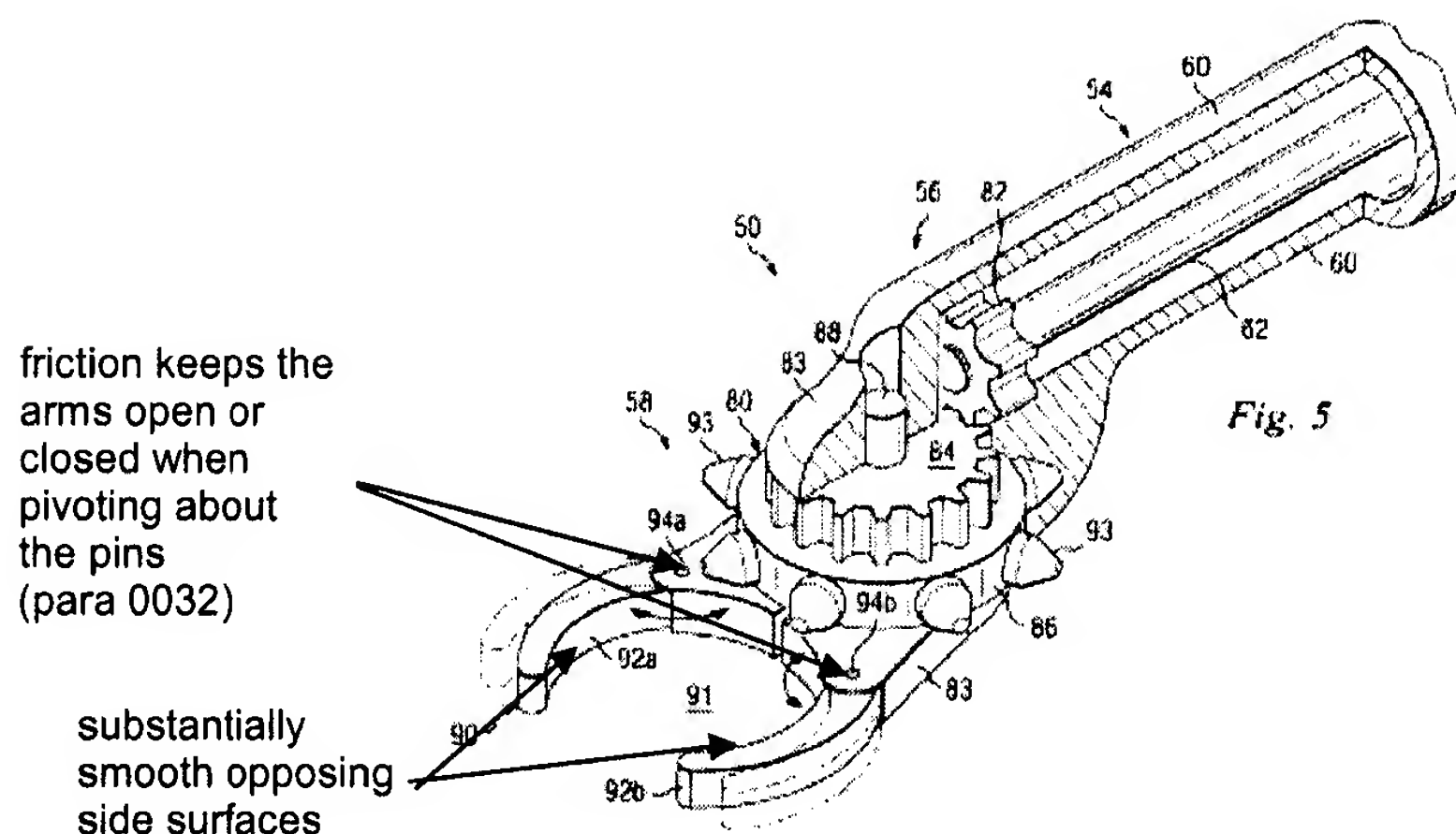
In the January 24, 2008 Office Action the Examiner made the following objections and rejections which are respectfully traversed for reasons subsequently set forth herein.

1. The specification is objected to for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for substantially smooth arc portions.
2. Claims 1-8 and 11-13 currently stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,190,414 to Young et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,277,123 to Maroney et al and U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2003/0229355 to Keller; and
3. Claims 23-24 and 27-29 currently stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,190,414 to Young et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,277,123 to Maroney et al, U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2003/0229355 to Keller, and U.S. Patent No. 6,752,832 to Neumann.

Rejection of the Specification

The specification stands objected to for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for substantially smooth arc portions. The January 24 Office Action has misquoted and misinterpreted the specification stating, "the specification discloses that the arc portions are 'friction-keeping' and thus would require a substantially 'rough' surface, or at least a surface that would not enable smooth movement." The Examiner appears to be referencing the passage of the specification at para 0032 which refers to FIG. 5 (below) and recites,

In one embodiment, the opposing arc portions 92a, 92b are selectively pivotable about pins 94a and 94b with friction keeping the arc portions 92a, 92b either open or closed.



This passage does not state that the arc portions are “friction-keeping” as asserted in the Office Action, rather it clearly describes that friction keeps the arc portions 92a, 92b either open or closed as they pivot about the pins 94a and 94b. This in no way relates to, and certainly does not teach away from, the claimed arc portions which have substantially smooth opposing side surfaces that partially surround and slidably engage the tubular body as the tubular body is rotated within the surrounding arc portions. For these reasons, we request the withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

§103 Rejection of Claims 1-8 and 11-13 based on the combination of Young, Maroney, and Keller.

Independent claim 1 stands rejected based upon the §103 combination of Young, Maroney, and Keller. This rejection is traversed because the Keller reference, which was filed on February 5, 2003, **is not prior art** to the present application which claims priority to a provisional application which was filed on September 23, 2002. Claim 1 is fully supported by the disclosure of the provisional application. For at least this reason, the rejection of independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-8 and 11-13 which depend from and further modify claim 1 should be withdrawn.

§103 Rejection of Claims 23-24 and 27-29 based on the combination of Young, Maroney, Keller, and Neumann.

Independent Claims 28 & 29

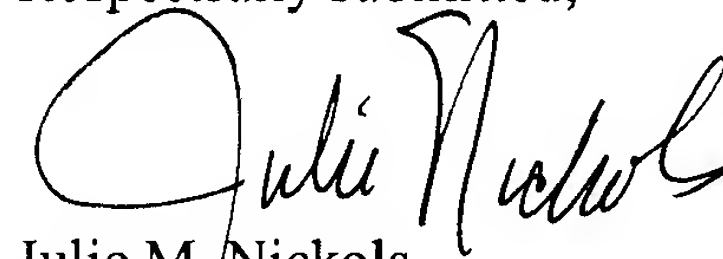
This rejection is traversed because, as previously explained, the Keller reference, filed on February 5, 2003, **is not prior art** to the present application which claims priority to a provisional application which was filed on September 23, 2002. Claims 28 and 29 are fully supported by the disclosure of the provisional application. For at least this reason, the rejection of independent claims 28 and 29 and dependent claims 23, 24, and 27 which depend from and further modify claim 28 should be withdrawn. Because claims 28 and 29 are not properly rejected, the finality of the January 24 Office Action should be removed.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, all of the claims currently pending in this application are now seen to be in a condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance of Claims 1-8, 11-13, 23, 24 and 27-29 is therefore earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is hereby requested to telephone the undersigned attorney of record at 972/739-8640 if such would further or expedite the prosecution of the instant application.

Respectfully submitted,




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Gayle Conner